

Land Use

2009

## What is the Land Use Element?

At its 1997 Session, the General Assembly passed five pieces of legislation and budget initiatives known collectively as "Smart Growth." Maryland has adopted the principles of Smart Growth to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

The following Smart Growth principle relates to the Land Use Element:

### Promote Mixed Land Use

- To put uses in close proximity to one another, create alternatives to driving, such as walking or biking
- To provide a more diverse and sizable population and commercial base
- To make neighborhoods attractive to workers who increasingly balance quality of life criteria with salary to determine where they will settle

## Purpose of Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is a key part of a comprehensive plan because it addresses the physical development of the entire jurisdiction.

It traditionally presents a picture of the municipality's land use patterns and makeup, both prior to and after anticipated growth has occurred.

It also is a policy document that contains goals, objectives and implementation recommendations that will guide the land use and intensity of development. The Land Use Element defines current land use and what it will look like when build-out occurs.

The current land use map depicts all land falling within the municipal boundaries, while the growth area land use map illustrates land uses for both current town and any municipal growth areas.

## Community Vision for Land Use

### *Environment & Land Use*

There are several major changes that residents want to see occur in the future to protect the environment of Westminster. They would like to see less construction of new housing developments or commercial developments. If any new homes are built in the future, residents would like the homes to be small, energy efficient and be able to conserve water. Residents want Westminster to become a "green city" where all residents work to reduce their carbon footprint.

### *Smart Growth & Land Use*

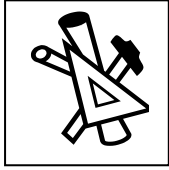
While residents would like to have more quality businesses, they want the addition of businesses that will follow the "smart growth" principles. As new developments and businesses become interested in building in Westminster, residents want to make sure that the city's infrastructure can support the new growth.

### *Character & Land Use*

Residents describe the small town charm of Westminster as an attraction for both future residents and visitors. Residents express a desire to maintain the friendly, open and inviting atmosphere of Westminster and to expand upon it in order to make it one of the city's greatest assets.

### *Transportation & Land Use*

Many residents choose walking or biking to get around the city. The second most frequent comment made by survey respondents was the need for improved pedestrian or bike accessibility. Residents would like to see a more inter-connected community that allowed for easy access to retail and recreation facilities from their neighborhoods.



## Part 1: Existing Development of Westminster

The City of Westminster features two distinct types of land use within its corporate limits: the traditional, relatively dense development found in the older parts of Westminster, and the suburban, less dense development located on the outskirts of the downtown area. Both types of development feature residential and commercial uses. Industrial uses are primarily located along the MD Route 27 and MD Route 97 corridors.

## Chapter 5

**Part 1: Existing Development of Westminster**

**Part 2: 2004 Land Use Plan**

**Part 3: Future Population**

**Part 4: Areas of Concern**

**Part 5: 2009 Land Use Map**

**Part 6: Land Use Designations**

**Goals and Objectives**

### Section 1: Traditional Development

The older development in Westminster is centered on the intersection of Main Street and MD Route 27 (Railroad Avenue & Liberty Street), extending primarily east and west along Main Street. The streets in this area were developed years ago in a grid pattern, and buildings were constructed with smaller front and side yard setbacks than in the more recently developed areas. Residential and commercial uses are often located in close proximity, encouraging pedestrian travel. Residential uses range from single family detached housing to apartments located above businesses. Several small apartment buildings are located in this area, as well as single family dwellings converted to apartment units. Commercial uses include restaurants, retail, and professional services of limited intensity. These commercial uses are focused on Main Street with smaller concentrations located on Pennsylvania Avenue and East Green Street. The dense, mixed-use pattern characteristic of downtown prevailed in the City until the 1950s, when MD Route 140 was completed as a bypass for Main Street.

### Section 2: Suburban Development

The construction of MD Route 140 made feasible the development on lands surrounding the existing City. Residential uses are separated from commercial and industrial uses in most areas. With the exception of some residential areas, this more recent development is characterized by wide, curvilinear streets and larger setbacks between buildings. The first major residential development of this type occurred west of MD Route 31 in the 1960s. Single-family detached homes comprise the majority of dwelling units in the more recently developed parts of Westminster, although some townhouses, apartments, and condominiums have also been constructed. Commercial uses in the MD Route 140 corridor include a shopping mall, large retail stores primarily located in 'strip mall' developments, and franchise restaurants. Many of the structures built on the City's prime industrial land, located north of

the City along MD Route 97, have been designed as ‘flex-space.’ This concept has encouraged a mix of commercial and industrial uses to develop along the MD Route 97 corridor.

### **Section 3: Open Space**

The majority of open space in the City of Westminster is public land. Pocket parks provide small areas of open space throughout the City and offer opportunities for active recreation. Open space lands created in new residential subdivisions through the City’s Cluster Subdivision ordinance supply additional acreage for outdoor recreation. Residents and visitors may also utilize the open space created by public school grounds. Several County-maintained parks and the Carroll County Farm Museum provide open space areas on the periphery of Westminster. Additional information on parks and recreation can be found in Chapter 11, Community Facilities & Public Services.

A number of farms in Carroll County have been permanently preserved from development through agricultural easements; however, there are no active farms located within the City’s corporate limits. There are no significant conservation easements or forested lands in the City. However, two properties adjacent to the city limits do contain agricultural preservation easements, and a third property located just outside the Westminster Community Planning Area is also subject to a preservation easement. The majority of land in Westminster has been developed, subdivided for development, or placed under public open space protection for recreational purposes.

## **Part 2: 2004 Land Use Plan**

Current land use patterns in the City of Westminster generally correspond with the original Comprehensive Land Use Plan adopted in 1985 by the City and Carroll County, partially because a large portion of the land within the City’s corporate limits was already developed when the 1985 Land Use Plan was adopted. A comparison of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map with the Zoning Map, in place in December 2008, indicates that the zoning districts closely follow the land use categories designated in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. The Westminster Planning Staff will organize the 2010 Comprehensive Re-Zoning of Westminster using the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and 2009 Land Use Map. The re-zoning process will allow for implementing the recommended land uses, shown on the 2009 Land Use Map, by correlating land uses with the Westminster Zoning Map and Ordinance. In preparation for the re-zoning, the Westminster Planning Staff will also have to conduct a study of key properties within the City that should be re-zoned to meet the goals and objectives of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan provides updated land uses only for those areas within the City’s corporate limits. Carroll County adopted the 2007 Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan in November 2007, which included the approved 2007 Land Use Designation and Growth Area Boundary Map for the Westminster Environs. This map shows the land use designations for land within

the Growth Area Boundary, but outside of the City limits. The Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission collaborated with Carroll County to adopt the 2007 Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan and approve of the land use designations adopted on the 2007 Land Use Designation and Growth Area Boundary Map.

## **Part 3: Future Population**

In order to determine the City's ability to accommodate the projected future population, City staff reviewed vacant residential land, additional land that has not been designated for residential uses, approved residential units that have not yet been constructed, and existing vacant units. This information regarding available acreage and approved units allowed staff to calculate the population capacity of Westminster (Table 5.1 and 5.2). As shown in the population capacity table, (Table 5.3) the current available residential land and housing units in Westminster provide the capacity for an additional 2,957 people; however, the population projections show an increase of 4,284 people by the year 2030. Westminster faces a projected housing shortage of 565 housing units or housing for 1,327 future residents. The Municipal Growth Element (Chapter 4) addresses the housing shortage in detail.

### **Section 1: Meeting Demand for Land**

An additional 94 acres of Urban Residential land (6 units per acre) would be required to accommodate the anticipated increase in Westminster's population. This figure also equates to 141 acres of Suburban Residential land (4 units per acre) or 283 acres of Low Density Residential land (2 units per acre). The need for additional industrial and commercial land to expand the City's employment base (see Chapter 9, Economic Development) is not included in these projected acreage totals. In 2010, the City of Westminster will conduct an Industrial and Commercial Land Use Study to determine the need for additional industrial and commercial land.

Once the City provides enough land to accommodate the projected in-migration, additional residential annexations should only proceed after a careful review of the City's infrastructure, growth policies, and adjusted population projections. The City should consider annexing land that is appropriate for dense residential development in order to accommodate the remainder of the projected population increase.

The City has followed a conservative approach to annexing land because of the City's limited supply of water to allocate new development projects. In order to conserve the City's limited amount of water, the City has created a water allocation policy that prioritizes development projects in order to decide what projects receive water allocation priority. Westminster is looking towards an alternative to additional annexations that include the revision of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the consideration of single-family attached and multi-family housing. Commercial and industrial annexations require a separate set of considerations based upon the specific services demanded by these uses.

**Table 5.1 Vacant Buildable Residential Land in Westminster, 2009**

Vacant Buildable Land	Acreage	Zoning	Units	Persons per Unit	Population Capacity
Humbert Property	1.8	R-7,500	7	2.35	16.45
Alt Property	0.4	R-7,500	1	2.35	2.35
Langdon Property	5	R-7,500	26	2.35	61.1
Horosko Property	6.8	R-7,500	32	2.35	75.2
Koontz Property	7.5	R-10,000	30	2.35	70.5
Rinehart Property	1.8	R-10,000	1	2.35	2.35
Tennant Property	2.1	R-10,000	8	2.35	18.8
Windsor Overlook	1.3	R-10,000	2	2.35	4.7
Scott Property	1.2	R-10,000	3	2.35	7.05
Riley Property	1.5	R-10,000	6	2.35	14.1
Poole Property	1.1	R-20,000	2	2.35	4.7
Bair Property	6.4	R-20,000	12	2.35	28.2
Roth Property	1.8	R-20,000	2	2.35	4.7
Griswold Property	12.1	R-20,000	19	2.35	44.65
Riley Property	0.9	R-20,000	1	2.35	2.35
Hart Property	1.2	R-20,000	2	2.35	4.7
Bodnar Property	0.6	R-20,000	1	2.35	2.35
Leister Property	0.8	R-10,000	3	2.35	7.05
Colonial Heights	1.06	R-7,500	4	2.35	9.4
Kremer Property	1.3	R-10,000	5	2.35	11.75
WMC Development Corp.	1.4	R-10,000	5	2.35	11.75
DASY Property	3.2	R-7,500	14	2.35	32.9
Shaw Property	3.7	R-20,000	7	2.35	16.45
Booth Property	15	R-7,500	15	2.35	35.25
Cornias Property	20	R-20,000	39	2.35	91.65
Other lots	6.1	n/a	21	2.35	49.35

<b>Total Vacant Buildable Land</b>	<b>106.06 Acres</b>
<b>Total Potential Dwelling Units</b>	<b>268 Units</b>
<b>Total Potential Population</b>	<b>630 Residents</b>

Source: City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development Department, 2009

**Table 5.2 Unbuilt Planned Developments in the City of Westminster, 2009**

Planned Development	Acreage	Zoning	Units per Acre	# of Units	Persons per Unit	Population Capacity
Arnold Property	8	R-10,000	2.8	15*	2.35	38
Bolton Hill	118	R-20,000	1.4	189*	2.35	472
Carroll Lutheran Village	52.8	R-20,000	1.4	73	1.5	110
Fenby Farm	20	R-20,000	1.4	28	2.35	70
Furnace Hills Section 2^	2.6	PD-4	n/a	30*	2.35	60
Jandy Property	4.5	R-10,000	2.8	12	2.35	30
Naganna Property	147	R-10,000	1.53	225	2.35	529
Ridge Terrace	10	R-10,000	2.8	17*	2.5	43
RJ Maring Property	1.7	R-10,000	2.8	4*	2.35	10
Roop Mill	89.6	R-10,000	2.8	190*	2.35	475
Royer Terrace	2.6	R-10,000	2.8	4*	2.35	10
Village of Meadow Creek	119.5	R-10,000	2.8	188*	2.5	470
Westminster Housing Inc	1.1	R-7,500	4.2	4	2.5	10

\* Number of Units Proposed by Developer

**Table 5.3: Total Residential Capacity in Westminster, 2009**

Buildable Land	Acres	Units	Population Capacity
Vacant Buildable Residential Land	106.6	268	630
Planned Developments	577.4	775	2327
<b>Total Buildable Land</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>1043</b>	<b>2957</b>

Source: City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development Department, 2009

## Part 4: Areas of Concern

Recent development in Westminster has generally conformed to the goals of the Land Use Plan and Map adopted as part of the City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan in June of 2004. The changing character of Carroll County and the continued growth experienced by the City has illuminated additional concerns not addressed in the 2004 plan. The appropriate redevelopment of underutilized parcels in the City's downtown area and the availability of various affordable housing options stand out as two land use issues facing the City in 2009.

The 2009 City of Westminster Development Capacity Analysis determined that under the current zoning and development scenario, the City has a limited housing unit capacity of 1,043 dwelling units. In order to accommodate the projected population growth for the next 20 years, Westminster will need to increase the housing unit capacity of the City by at least 648 dwelling units. As of 2009, the City of Westminster had 106 acres of vacant residential land. The current water crisis has limited the City's ability to expand the municipal boundaries beyond its water service capacity for about five years. This will require the City of Westminster to look inside its boundaries for opportunities to develop housing units, making vacant land a precious resource (See Chapter 4: Municipal Growth).

As the amount of vacant land continues to decrease and the need for housing units increases, promoting creative mixed-use, infill or redevelopment of unconventional parcels becomes a priority. A significant number of parcels in the downtown area of Westminster have the capacity to absorb a portion of this increased demand. The Maryland Route 27 Corridor Study, completed in the Fall of 2002 under a grant from the Maryland Department of Transportation, identified key sites for redevelopment within the downtown area. These parcels are located along the MD Route 27 and Main Street corridors and are shown in Map 8.1.

### Section 1: MD 27 & Main Street Redevelopment Plan

The City of Westminster has a vision for the development of the parcels of land along MD 27 and Main Street that is appropriate to the character of the existing downtown. Many of these parcels front the main thoroughfares of the City. Development on these parcels would impact the identity and experience of old-town Westminster. Land uses that are compatible with the character of the district will reinforce the existing historic and pedestrian-friendly patterns of development. Compatible uses would replicate the mixed-use nature of downtown and capitalize on building and population density. Intrusion of suburban-style development would disrupt this pattern and introduce low-density auto-oriented uses that would fail to maximize the utility of the land. Land use regulations should require development along the MD 27 Corridor to complement and enhance the existing character of the downtown area.



## Section 2: Workforce & Affordable Housing

In Chapter 7, Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, the issue of the scarcity of moderately priced, affordable housing in Westminster is addressed. The lack of quality rental housing and a shortage of single-family attached dwellings and condominiums are primary causes of affordable housing issues in the City. Homogenous proliferation of single-family detached units can price a significant number of prospective homebuyers out of the local housing market, forcing those who work in the City to live in other communities some distance away.

The preservation of residential land for single-family detached units, without the provision for alternative housing types in proportion to market demand, encourages the conversion of existing homes into apartment units. The creation of a zoning district specifically for multi-family units such as townhouses, condominiums, and apartments would encourage new construction of a diversity of housing types. Such a district would preserve parcels most suited for these more intense residential uses. In addition, the aggregate quality of affordable housing would improve as new structures take advantage of advancements in construction materials and practices.

## Part 5: 2009 Land Use Map

The City of Westminster 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map (Map 5.1) reflects the planned and existing land uses located within the corporate limits (Map 5.2). The updated Map largely retained the land uses designated in the 2004 Land Use Plan; however, the expansion of the corporate boundaries since 2004 requires appropriate designations of additional land not examined in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan.

After studying the 2004 Comprehensive Land Use Map (Map 5.3), the 2008 City Zoning Map (Map 5.4) and looking at existing development and land use patterns within the City, Staff has concluded that several land use changes should be proposed for the 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map. All of the proposed changes in Land Use are reflected in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Most of Westminster's land uses will remain the same as implementation of the Comprehensive Plan proceeds, but there will be some important changes in land use as the City pursues its future.

It is the intent of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan to encourage densities in certain areas of Westminster to gradually begin to increase to levels that are more appropriate for an urban area and steer away from the past suburban area developments that currently exist in the City. The increase in density will be greatest in and around Downtown, and in certain areas close to the transit corridors and arterials such as Main Street. The restoration of density should be helpful if it can stimulate a sustainable supply of housing that can meet the needs of the community for the next 20 years. The key changes in land use are described below and reflect the goals of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

The following sections present the land use changes found within the 2009 Land Use Map:

## Section 1: Annexed Land

The most significant change in the 2009 Land Use Plan, in comparison to the 2004 Land Use Plan, is the inclusion of recently annexed lands and their land use designations into the plan. In some cases, the land use designations of these properties remain unchanged from the 1985 Land Use Map. In other cases, the properties received a waiver of zoning from the County Commissioners upon annexation. The land use designations of recently annexed properties reflect the City's intention for the land to develop in accordance with the zoning adopted at the time of annexation. Since the adoption of the 2004 Land Use Map, the City of Westminster has annexed the following properties.

- Naganna Property
- Stoler Property
- Westminster Ridge Property
- Dasy Property

The City has not annexed any properties since April 2006 based on the Mayor and Common Council deferral on new annexations. In addition, the limited development that has occurred in the past six years has been concentrated to the West of MD 31.

## Section 2: Neighborhood Commercial

The Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission (WPZC) recommended that the WMC Development Corporation property receive a land use change from Commercial to Neighborhood Commercial. This property is made up of four lots surrounding the College Square Shopping Center, on MD 31. The Neighborhood Commercial Land Use designation will provide a method for the orderly grouping and spacing of limited commercial development on properties outside, of the City's downtown, with quality design. The site is suitable for Neighborhood Commercial because it is intended to allow for appropriate commercial development in a convenient location, without adversely affecting the physical development pattern of nearby residential areas.

The WMC Development Corporation property borders two neighborhoods, as well as the McDaniel College campus, and is located across the street from another Neighborhood Commercial property, Shoppes at Meadow Creek. Of the total 34.2 acres, about 19.77 acres are currently developed or improved with a shopping center, a hotel and a stormwater management pond. The remaining 16.7 acres are vacant. Vacant land is a precious commodity within Westminster; as a result the WPZC will hold this property to a higher standard than most commercial properties, in order to achieve an attractive property that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods. The 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map has re-designated the land use of the 34.2 acre parcel from Commercial to Neighborhood Commercial.

### Section 3: Mixed Use Infill

The 2004 Comprehensive Plan targeted the center of Downtown, along MD 27, as a prime opportunity for the use of the Mixed Use Infill zone. The Mixed Use Infill zone expands upon the goals of the two downtown zones by requiring a vertical mix of uses, establishing design guidelines, and providing for shared parking among uses. The Mixed Use Infill zone also responds to the workforce and affordable housing shortage in the City. This zone allows for multi-family housing at a density of up to 25 dwelling units per acre as a principal permitted use in combination with a retail or office use on the first floor. The construction of multi-family dwellings in the downtown area would provide increased housing choices for residents and a more active 18-hour environment in the heart of the City. The 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map has re-designated the land use of the MD 27 Gateway Corridor, also known as the center of Downtown Westminster, from Central Business to Mixed Use Infill. This change of land use reflects the vision of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan for the future of Downtown Westminster and meets the need of increasing workforce housing in the City of Westminster.

### Section 4: Employment Campus

The City of Westminster has seen an increase in special exceptions requests to the Board of Zoning Appeals for office space in the Air Business Center over the past couple of years. The current zoning of this area is Restricted Industrial (IR). In March 2009, the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission (WPZC) assigned staff to conduct an existing land use study of the Air Business Center to determine if the IR land use represents the current use of land. The study showed that the majority of existing land uses in the Air Business Center are office or mixed-use commercial. The significant increases in special exceptions for office space, and the findings of the existing land use study, indicate that there is a need for a change in land use to meet the demands of the local economy.

The Land Use designation Employment Campus is better suited for the Air Business Center. The purpose of the Employment Campus District is to provide an implementation process that will encourage creative, well planned, mixed industrial and commercial development in a campus-like setting, including: consistent and uniform site layouts; architecture designed to attract business and light industry; employers that provide primarily higher paying jobs requiring highly skilled workers; and, businesses that are willing to construct buildings on campuses that are aesthetically pleasing and contribute significantly to the County's tax base. The 2009 buildable land study showed there are 22 acres of vacant buildable land in the Air Business Center. These remaining 22 acres should meet the Employment Campus standards with well planned, mixed industrial and commercial development compatible to the existing businesses that will promote new jobs to boost the local economy. The 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map has re-designated the land use of the Air Business Center from Industrial to Employment Campus.

## Section 5: Planned Development

Hollow Rock Farm and its environs is an area rich in history and marked by diverse natural beauty. An underground stream in the cave, feeds a large pond on the property that is filled with native aquatic life. A tributary of Little Pipe Creek runs through the property; the current owner planted hundreds of willow stakes to hold the banks along the creek from the ravages of storm water running from city streets. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Army Corps of Engineers, Maryland Midland Railway, and the County's Office of Storm Water Management combined resources (including a \$50,000 grant from the State) to install check dams in the dry bed running through the property. A 100 foot stream buffer is now firmly established and will help protect the tributary from the effects of development. The owner also worked with the State Department of Natural Resources to plant a field of warm season grasses to create habitat for local wildlife and to reduce the area of land requiring mowing.

This land, totaling roughly 25 acres, is situated in walking distance of Downtown Westminster. It is a perfect candidate for careful development of a workforce housing community that offers significant recreational opportunities. It is located in an environment that has been carefully attended to by the current owner in order to create habitat for local wildlife and to preserve stream health. The current land use of the property is Urban Residential. However, the property owner met with the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission (WPZC) to voice her desire to develop the property in a more environmentally-friendly manner while increasing the current density. The WPZC determined that changing the land use to Planned Development would better represent the vision of the property owner. This vision coincides with the goals of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan such as increasing workforce housing and creating quality green building projects.

If development of this property is approached properly, it could be extended to include other plats of land that adjoin Carroll County's cultural center: the Farm Museum. The County's Department of Parks and Recreation is planning a trail system through the area. This area has the potential to be a model development that utilizes existing green building and landscaping approaches and creates a vibrant community for the people who serve the Westminster community including teachers, firefighters, police and nurses. The 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map has re-designated the land use of the 25 acre parcel from Urban Residential to Planned Development.

## Section 6: Conservation

The 1978 Development Plan for the Wakefield Valley restricted the development of housing within the parcel where Wakefield Valley Golf Course and Conference Center exists today. However, the current land use is Low Density Residential even though the development plan will not allow any residential homes to be built in this area. The WPZC recommended a land use change from Low Density Residential to Conservation to reflect the development plan and the existing land use. The existing land use for this parcel is the Wakefield Valley Golf Course and Conference Center surrounded by forest land and natural

landscapes as well as a stream that runs from the southwest corner to the eastern portion of the parcel. This change reflects how the land is currently used; however, this change does not change the approved Development Plan for Wakefield Valley. The 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map has re-designated the land use of this 240 acre parcel from Low Density Residential to Conservation.

## Section 7: Commercial

St. John's of Westminster, Roman Catholic Church owns the 29.54 acre parcel at 43-45 Monroe Street in Westminster. The Parish made a request to the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission (WPZC) for a change of land use for a small portion of the property that is located in the northwest corner at the intersection of the Wimert Avenue and MD Route 140. This is a heavily trafficked intersection and is ideally suited for a retail or commercial use. The proposed plan would be to subdivide off a three to five acre parcel of this area, and then lease it for 15 to 20 years to a relatively low-impact commercial user such as a bank, drug store or lifestyle restaurant. The WPZC determined that this use would be compatible with similar commercial uses that currently exist at the Wimert Avenue and MD Route 140 intersection. The 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map has re-designated the land use of the 5 acre parcel from Urban Residential to Commercial.

The owners of the Tenant Property also made a request to the WPZC for a change of land use from Low Density Residential to Commercial. The entire Tenant Property is 3.71 acres; of that, a 0.44 acre parcel is already developed by a car repair shop at Cranberry Rd/MD 140. The remaining 3.16 acres are undeveloped. The property is surrounded by commercial uses. The 2004 Land Use Map designated the remaining 3.16 acres low-density residential; however, the 2008 Zoning Map shows 1.6 acres of the total 3.71 acres to be zoned Business. The Tenant Family made a request to the WPZC for a change of land use of the 3.16 acres to correspond with the zoning of the rest of the Tenant Property and the existing use of land for the surrounding properties. The WPZC determined that the current zoning and the compatibility of neighboring properties provides justification for a change of land use. The 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map has re-designated the land use of the 3.16 acre parcel from Low Density Residential to Commercial.

## Section 8: Industrial

Thomas, Bennett and Hunter, Inc. (TBH) is a ready-mixed concrete supplier for central Maryland and the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. TBH is located on 70 John Street in Downtown Westminster. The property is zoned Restricted Industrial (I-R) except for a small part of the property that is zoned Residential and totals 0.7122 acres. TBH made a request to the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission (WPZC) for a change of land use of the 0.7122 acres to correspond with the land use designation of the rest of the TBH property and that the change of land use is compatible with the existing industrial use of the land. The WPZC determined that the existing use of land provides justification for a change of land use. The 2009 Comprehensive Land Use Map has re-designated the land use of the 0.7122 acre parcel from Urban Residential to Industrial.

## **Part 6: Land Use Designations**

### **Central Business**

Central Business is located in the downtown commercial district of Westminster, focused along Main Street. This land use allows for a broad mix of commercial uses that are compatible with denser development and nearby residential neighborhoods abutting downtown Westminster. Dimensional requirements allow new development of a similar layout to existing buildings, enhance the pedestrian orientation of downtown, and provide for convenient customer and client parking.

### **Downtown Business**

Downtown Business consists of those commercial areas within Westminster's downtown that are located outside of the Central Business District. The retail and service uses must be compatible with the quiet nature of the residential and office uses. Dimensional requirements enhance the pedestrian orientation of downtown, provide for convenient customer and client parking, and establish building heights that are compatible with the residential uses found in the Downtown Business and surrounding Zoning Districts.

### **Neighborhood Commercial**

Neighborhood Commercial areas are generally located in the more recently developed portions of Westminster, primarily along the Maryland Route 31 corridor where commercial space is limited. The intent of this designation is to provide convenient retail and service uses to residents in close proximity to the site. The design of proposed developments in the Neighborhood Commercial designation must accommodate motor vehicles while also accounting for safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists. Emphasis is also placed on minimizing the number of vehicular access points and the visual appearance of development.

### **Mixed Use Infill**

The Mixed Use Infill Land Use promotes a more attractive and varied commercial, office, and residential environment than would be possible through the strict application of Euclidean zonal district requirements. The goal of this land use is to encourage developers to use a more creative approach in the development of land and to provide suitable sites for the development of integrated commercial, office, and residential facilities.

## **Commercial**

Commercial areas are located primarily along Maryland Route 140. Uses are retail and service oriented, and design criteria for this district accommodates automobile access and high traffic volumes.

## **Industrial**

Industrial areas are found on the outskirts of downtown Westminster and in several industrial parks along the Maryland Route 97 (N) corridor. This land use allows for a variety of industrial and accessory uses. Regulations ensure that industrial users do not become a nuisance to surrounding properties.

## **Planned Residential Development**

A planned development allows for greater variety and flexibility in the design of residential developments and a more diversified mix of housing types. Applicants may request a rezoning to a Planned Development zone in the Urban and Suburban Residential areas. Specific requirements for this type of use are listed in the Zoning Ordinance.

## **Urban Residential**

The majority of land designated for Urban Residential development is located within the older developed sections of the City. This is a high density residential classification which allows for five to six units per acre and a mixture of housing types.

## **Suburban Residential**

Suburban Residential areas are located primarily in the Uniontown Road Corridor, North of Maryland Route 140, and along South Center Street. This designation allows for four dwelling units per acre and a variety of housing types.

## **Low Density Residential**

Land designated for Low Density Residential is found in the Wakefield Valley area and north of Maryland Route 140 in the western portion of the City. Two units per acre are permitted on land designated as Low Density Residential, and single-family detached housing is the only permitted type in these areas.

## **Housing for Older Persons**

Land within the Housing for Older Persons designation is generally located in existing neighborhoods where there is adequate vacant land available for high-density senior housing. This type of development will afford older persons the opportunity to live in a convenience-driven community that provides larger housing units and preserves personal independence in the home environment.

## **Conservation**

Areas designated as Conservation are scattered throughout Westminster on recreation space, parkland, stream valleys, areas of steep slopes and soil limitations, and areas where very low-density development is necessary to protect natural resources. Development on Conservation land is not anticipated.

## **Public Use**

The Public Use designation is an overlay designation that indicates properties that are publicly owned, exclusive of park areas. If a public use were eliminated, the underlying land use would guide future development.

## **Employment Campus**

The Employment Campus designation encourages creative, well planned, mixed industrial and commercial development in a campus-like setting. It will require consistent and uniform site layouts; architecture designed to attract business and light industry and employers that provide primarily higher paying jobs requiring highly skilled workers.



**Table 5.4 Land Use Designations, 2009 Land Use Map**

Land Use Designation	Zoning Equivalent	Acreage	% of Total
Central Business	C-B, C-C	18	0.43%
Downtown Business	D-B	93	2.22%
Neighborhood Commercial	N-C	94	2.25%
Commercial	B, PRSC	458	10.94%
Industrial	P-I, I-R, I-G	392	9.36%
Planned Residential Development	PD-4, PD-9	264	6.31%
Urban Residential	R-7,500	382	9.13%
Suburban Residential	R-10,000	1,164	27.81%
Low Density Residential	R-20,000	683	16.32%
Conservation	C	472	11.28%
Employment Campus	E-C	108	2.58%
Mixed-Use Infill	M-U	38	0.91%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4,186</b>	<b>100</b>

*\* The land use designation and the zoning of a property may conflict in certain cases.*

Source: City of Westminster Department Planning, Zoning and Development, 2009

## Land Use Element

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies to protect public investment and assets by encouraging the efficient use of community infrastructure and natural resources. In the future, the City of Westminster will work to assure the orderly, efficient growth of the City by encouraging development in those areas which are best served by infrastructure and community services. The City of Westminster is committed to encouraging growth in a manner that enhances the value and character of existing business and community investments. Land uses will continue to protect the quality of life of the community and to enhance the physical environment of Westminster. Land Use goals and recommendations are located throughout the 2009 Comprehensive Plan under each Element.

### Goals and Objectives

#### **Goal L1: Ensure new development is compatible with the community vision for the future of Westminster**

##### **Objective 1:** Address compatibility between land uses

- a. Require conformance of commercial development near residential areas with the Westminster Design Guidelines
- b. Continue efforts in Downtown Westminster that address the appearance of this commercial area and improve access for pedestrians from nearby neighborhoods
- c. Ensure sufficient buffers between commercial or industrial uses and adjacent residential areas

##### **Objective 2:** Infill development along MD Route 27 and Main Street should be coincide with downtown redevelopment efforts and plans

- a. Rezone appropriate parcels to the Mixed Use Infill Zone
- b. Ensure consistent and contiguous pedestrian accessibility along MD Route 27
- c. Consider the addition of on-street parking along MD Route 27
- d. Relocate overhead utilities to the rear of properties where possible
- e. Work with developers to determine and construct improvements to MD 27 that would be needed to accommodate infill development

**Goal L2: Allow for a full range of residential uses to promote diversity in the housing stock while increasing the housing unit capacity, as outlined in the Municipal Growth Element**

**Objective 1:** Allow a mix of residential unit types in Westminster neighborhoods

- a. Review regulations, development review processes, and staff procedures to determine whether it is appropriate to streamline the process for approval of Planned Development applications
- b. Support and encourage development offering a mix of housing types, including mixed-use development that provides easy access to downtown amenities
- c. Provide opportunities for the construction of compatible infill within the older parts of Westminster and the development of “neo-traditional” type neighborhoods
- d. Refine language in the residential zoning districts that specifically address accessory apartments and the conversion of accessory buildings to dwelling units
- e. Encourage use of the Cluster Subdivision Ordinance

**Objective 2:** Ensure the availability of quality single-family attached and multi-family housing units to accommodate future population growth

- a. Consider the creation of a zone exclusively for townhouse or multi-family development
- b. Identify appropriate sites to zone for single-family attached and multi-family development to increase housing unit capacity
- c. Consider the adoption of design guidelines for multi-family housing developments

**Goal L3: Provide a sustainable balance of new commercial, industrial, and residential land to meet existing and future demand**

**Objective 1:** Expand the corporate limits where appropriate to accommodate projected residential growth and provide needed jobs and services in the City

- a. Coordinate with the County to identify parcels that are appropriate for annexation as industrial or commercial land
- b. Extend water and sewer service to annexed lands when appropriate

**Objective 2:** Ensure that expansions of the corporate boundary do not impose an undue burden on the City's public facilities and infrastructure

- a. Review potential annexations for adequate public facilities and roads
- b. Ensure that annexation occurs according to the need projected by future demand

**Goal L4: While recognizing infill development is the preferred method of growth, plan for the expansion of city boundaries to accommodate growth in the future**

**Objective 1:** Develop master plans or studies for key properties within the "Growth Area" in order to prepare for future development that meets the vision and needs of the community

- a. Prioritize identified key properties within the "Growth Area" for potential new residential, commercial and industrial development
- b. Coordinate with County Planning Staff and the representatives from the community to create a unified vision for the priority key properties
- c. Review areas for future expansion outside of the City on an annual basis

**Objective 2:** Annexations and extension of full City infrastructure should occur only as infrastructure and city services can be feasibly provided.

- a. Carefully analyze for general compliance with this Comprehensive Plan all applications for the expansion of city boundaries
- b. Evaluate the fiscal impact of all proposed annexations

**Objective 3:** Coordinate with the County to implement the Westminster Environs Plan and the Carroll County Comprehensive Plan

- a. Cooperate with Carroll County to establish and implement uniform standards for development within the "Growth Area"

**Goal L5: Design communities in a way that permits more efficient use of land and resources**

**Objective 1:** Support infill development and other redevelopment options on underutilized residential or commercial lots

- a. Identify priority redevelopment areas in order to encourage redevelopment within established areas of the City
- b. Promote the infill of the existing Central Business District and Downtown Business District with business and high density residential uses
- c. Develop and utilize neighborhood compatibility and designs standards to guide infill development and other redevelopment options

**Objective 2:** Plan for increased density to provide high quality projects that will balance the need for accommodating growth and maintaining small town character

- a. Encourage buildings to grow vertically rather than horizontally, and to incorporate structured rather than surface parking, in order to reduce the footprint for new construction
- b. Review and revise the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for the promotion of development with a mix of uses and densities
- c. Consider density bonuses or other incentive for projects within the City core to achieve desired densities
- d. Develop appropriate standards and guidelines for higher density projects

**Objective 3:** Acquire or secure use of lands for parks, open space and trails, in conjunction with public and private sector development projects

- a. Prioritize existing park needs so that acquisition and development begins in areas of the City with the greatest deficiencies
- b. The City should encourage the dedication of public parkland through land donations, cash contributions or other compensations
- c. Require pathways in developing areas that will connect with other neighborhoods, public spaces or retail areas